



Agenda Item Summary

File #: 23-00566

Agenda Date: 9/26/2023

Agenda Item Name:

Z23-000003: Transmittal Public Hearing for Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment Updating Equity and Environmental Justice Definitions and Policies

Presenter:

Ben Chumley, Principal Planner, Growth Management, (352)374-5249
Dr. Diedre Houchen, Equity and Community Outreach Manager, (352) 384-3195

Description:

Proposed County-initiated text amendment to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element to revise equity and environmental justice definitions and related land use policies. Staff is requesting that the Board of County Commissioners (Board) approve transmittal of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment for state agency review. If the amendment is approved for transmittal and no significant issues are identified in the state review process, the amendment would come back to the Board for final adoption at a public hearing, likely in December 2023.

Recommended Action:

Approve transmittal of proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment Z23-000003 to the State Land Planning Agency and other agencies for review and comment.

Prior Board Motions:

June 6, 2023: The Board received a presentation and discussed the draft Comprehensive Plan amendment language and authorized staff to move forward with the process for a proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment.

Fiscal Note:

No fiscal impacts are anticipated as a result of approving transmittal of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment for state agency review.

Strategic Guide:

Social and Economic Opportunity

Background:

In August 2021, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the Alachua County Equity Workplan Phase I, launching the County's overall equity and community engagement work. As part of the implementation of that Workplan, the Equity Core Strategic Leadership Team identified the Growth Management Department for departmental goal setting relating to equity.

In June 2022, the County's Equity Core Strategic Leadership Team (Cohort 1) identified two specific short-term goals for the Growth Management Department, one of which is to prepare draft amendments to the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan that would:

1. Clarify up-front "social equity", "environmental justice", and other definitions, and
2. Clarify Future Land Use Element Objective 5.2, "Location and Compatibility", Policy 5.2.1, to articulate a universal goal around "neighborhood character" for institutional land uses instead of protecting neighborhood character only "by design" (i.e., applying design strategies such as buffers, setbacks, building orientation, etc.).

Growth Management staff have worked collaboratively with the County's Equity and Community Outreach Manager to prepare the proposed set of draft amendments to the Comprehensive Plan to address the two specific items noted above. The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment language, as well as a summary and analysis of the proposed amendments, are provided in the attached staff report.

The proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment draft language was presented to the Board of County Commissioners on June 6, 2023, and at that meeting, the Board instructed staff to move forward with the Comprehensive Plan amendment process.

A community workshop was held on July 31, 2023 to present the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments and receive feedback from the public. The public input received at that workshop is documented in the attached workshop summary.

The Alachua County Planning Commission/Local Planning Agency held a public hearing on August 16, 2023, and recommended that the Board of County Commissioners approve transmittal of the proposed Comprehensive Plan amendment for state agency review. The Planning Commission motion included the additional comment that a robust community engagement process is needed to ensure that the proposed amendments are applied in practice.

In addition to the currently proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan which are expected to be completed in 2023, staff is also working on medium- and longer-term goals relating to equity and comprehensive planning, which include conducting an equity audit of the Alachua County Comprehensive Plan as well as an overall update of the Comprehensive Plan to address equity matters more fully.